

ness, she answered tremulously: 'Why, Kingston Fleming.'

'Didst love Kingston Fleming then?'

'Then—now—and always!' And she sank upon his breast.

(To be concluded next month.)

SKETCHES IN VANCOUVER ISLAND.

VANCOUVER Island, which forms part of British North America, and stretches a length of three hundred miles along the coast of the Pacific, is still little known, although singularly attractive for its picturesque beauty, its fine climate, and its many interesting objects in natural history. The writer of this happened to be a resident in that beautiful island in 1876, and is able to say something of its scenery and products.

We were particularly struck with the grandeur of the forests. The huge dimensions of some of the trees fill one with amazement; nor is there less surprise at the profusion of gem-like berries of many varieties. The moist alluvial soil produces the delicious salmon-berry, in appearance a glowing jewel of gold; these, with cranberries, bramble-berries, currants, and a small black gooseberry, are very abundant. The most arid and rocky situations are often fairly black with grape-like bunches of the sweet sellal berry, which grows on a low hardy evergreen, and defies frosts until late in the season. Another variety of the gooseberry, larger than the black ones, with a skin covered with a bitter and glutinous secretion, grows very abundantly on the dryer soils. Its pulp when ripe is similar to cultivated varieties. The red huckleberry, strawberry, and raspberry, with some others, abound in the gravelly pine-lands. Man's constant need of timber is abundantly met in these forests. The Douglas or red fir, a tough dense wood, attains a great size, and prevails almost universally. The red cedar, hemlock, spruce, white pine, balsam pine, and other useful conifers, are plentiful; while among deciduous trees may be mentioned maples, beeches, cherries, and oaks, which are more sparsely distributed.

To the lover of natural scenery few things are more delightful than a canoe cruise along this coast and among the intricate avenue-like channels which surround the adjacent islands. The rocky shores, mostly of a sandstone formation, are for miles wrought and carved by ocean tides and sands until they resemble fantastic Gothic architecture. The lofty snow-clad peaks of the neighbouring continent afford a sublime background to the clear azure sea and verdant graces of the nearer coasts, whose inviting bays and tiny coves seem to bid the voyager to land and explore.

Both Siwash and Cloochman, as the males and females of Vancouver Island are respectively styled, ply the paddle and sail with great dexterity. Canoeing is their forte. Many families spend more than half their lives on the water, travelling immense distances, and boldly crossing wide straits in seas that are often boisterous. Most picturesque in its details is an Indian encampment, as seen every day in the vicinity of Nanaimo, Comet, and other settlements on the eastern coast. The capacious canoe is hauled beyond reach of tides, and if in sunny weather, carefully shaded, to prevent cracking. Everything needed for use is removed to the camping-ground.

A few poles and rush-mats form the necessary shelter. In making the mats the aquaws (women) are very skilful, and form an ever-present and prominent adjunct to the Indian household. If the family have just returned from a successful hunt, they will probably have four or five deer to skin and dress; besides a dozen or two of grouse, a few ducks and geese; and often a seal, or elk, or black bear adds variety to the bill of fare. The skins of the animals are stretched, dried, and sold, together with such superfluous meat as can be disposed of. Two or three small wolfish dogs are generally to be seen tied up and eyeing the butchering operations with keen interest. Towards evening, presuming the necessary tasks have been accomplished, men women and children recline lazily upon their mats, and for hours make the night hideous with their peculiar clucking language.

Besides the substantial supplies already enumerated, Ocean furnishes with no niggardly hand his gleaming luxuries, of which the salmon forms the chief. In a fragile bark which holds but one, and can be lifted with one hand, Siwash or Cloochman starts for the salmon-grounds, often a mile or two from the village. Trolling a line of about twenty yards with a spoon bait or natural fish attached, he or she paddles at a moderate pace, carefully avoiding entanglement with sea-weed. The line being held with the paddle, each stroke of the latter gives the bait a spasmodic and life-like movement, highly conducive to success. Many salmon (of inferior quality) are taken in the rivers by spearing; and though the river-banks are frequently offensive from the number of fish that have died from injuries received in ascending to and returning from the spawning-ground, hungry bears and sea-fowl innumerable perform the scavenger's cleanly offices.

The natives have a peculiar mode of catching a small fish which resembles a herring, but is inferior to it in size. Taking a lath-like stick of tough wood, the edge of the end not handled being armed for several feet with thin iron spikes, they proceed slowly in search of their prey, using their implement like a paddle, and darting it rapidly through the finny droves. By this manoeuvre a dozen or two are frequently impaled at a stroke, and adroitly transferred to the canoe to be used as bait. Herring and herring-spawn are largely eaten, both fresh and dried, the spawn being obtained by placing fir branches in the quiet bays which the herring frequent. As soon as the branches are covered, the spawn is collected and dried in the sun. Halibut and rock-cod are also caught in these waters. Among shell-fish may be mentioned a poor apology for the oyster, which seldom attains a diameter exceeding an inch. Its near neighbour the clam atones for this deficiency, and is frequently got upwards of a pound in weight. Very dear to the heart of Siwash is this mud-loving crustacean, which plays an active part in rustic repasts. The bivalve is often smoked, dried, and put on long skewers; and together with dried salmon, forms an unfailing adjunct to the Indian cuisine. Besides the oyster and clam, the mussel, razor-fish, cockle, and a few others are found on these coasts.

The Vancouver Islanders are a broad-shouldered, stalwart race, though perhaps a trifle below the medium stature. On their 'reservations' a few families raise stock, grain, and potatoes.

This result, however, has not been obtained without much official encouragement. A few are employed as occasional day-labourers about the Nanaimo coal-mines, and some are employed more steadily by the miners underground. The store-keepers avail themselves of their services when they need porters. Many households also employ the women for washing, &c. A language called Chinook is learned both by whites and reds, for mutual convenience in trading and ordinary intercourse. This mixture of many tongues was introduced by the Hudson Bay Company, but can scarcely be called a classical language, being far more useful than elegant, English, French, and native dialects being among its constituent parts. Another remaining mark of Hudson Bay influence is found in the curious currency existing among these people. Probably no race has ever had so bulky a circulating medium as the ordinary blanket, which in the rude lodges of the richer chiefs is stored up by hundreds, and is everywhere acknowledged to be the token of wealth.

The squaws are cunning in the manufacture of water-tight baskets, which are used for many household purposes. Their bark canoes are also unique though simple in construction. Not only in canoe-building do the Siwashes display their handicraft, but many of the villages are ornamented with grotesque carvings, apparently of heathen deities. At Comox and Nanaimo might be seen a short time ago poles two or three feet in diameter with fantastic figures carved one over the other nearly to the top. At the latter place a colossal painting of a fish resembling a salmon, though perhaps intended for a whale, confronted us as we approached the village from the water.

Weird and ghostly in appearance is the Indian burial-ground hard by this spot. Steering up towards the head of the broad Nanaimo Bay until the rising ground with its heavy forests casts darkling shadows over the waters, one sees two strange goblin-like figures, hideous with paint and ghastly protruding eyeballs, apparently keeping guard over this 'city of the dead.' By the side of each of these wooden figures are poles supporting white flags, which may be intended as emblems of that truce to evil thoughts which all humanity observes towards the dead. These simple children of Nature, like some who claim more refinement, seem sadly loath to be placed underground, many of the Indian corpses being laid upon beds and covered with blankets, while a rude wooden hut is erected around. Within reach of the dead Indian's hand is often placed a piece of tobacco; and food and water are added by loving survivors. The Methodists have laboured devotedly here, together with Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

The aboriginal tribes of the island, now that they are being brought face to face with modern civilisation, are rapidly disappearing. Small-pox has reaped its thousands, and vice and intemperance their tens of thousands, among these and neighbouring races. In Victoria and other of the towns and settlements, one remarks the comfortable European attire of many of the Indians, particularly the younger ones, who seem to prize such apparel more than most of the Pacific tribes do. During the long winter evenings, men, women, and children will gather together in one of their capacious halls and hold their sports far into the

night. The hall, often more than one hundred feet in length and fifty broad, is brilliantly lighted and warmed by huge fires of bark or pitch pine; the fires being built on the earthen floor, three in a row on each side of the interior, and having an attendant specially detailed to look after them. Seldom more than one person dances at once. If a Siwash is performing, he is often decorated with a garland of feather, with perhaps a panther or bear skin loosely thrown across the shoulders, and bells fastened around the ankles. His movements are agile rather than graceful, a succession of high leaps and bounds being often accompanied with dumb-show and singing, in which latter the audience join strenuously. When the broad-faced, good-humoured Cloochman (the literal meaning in Chinook of the last word is Goodman!) appears in the arena, her dress is often of the usual cotton fabric, her features are daubed with paint, and her thick raven locks absurdly smothered in white downy feathers. She sometimes jingles an instrument like a tumbourine, and from her movements appears deeply impressed with the motto 'Excelsior;' but alas! her vast superfluity of adipose tissue and the forces of gravity combine to extinguish her lofty aspirations. If mortal eyes could behold a well-fed duck striving earnestly for gymnastic fame, its performances would probably resemble those of our lady-friend. No conventional ideas bid her to use the toe more than the heel in dancing. Upon making careful inquiries, the spectator will discover that the performers in these dances are generally in a kind of delirium, the result of severe fasting extended over many days. Their utterances are regarded as the inspirations of the Great Spirit, and the dancers doubtless obtain a tribute of reverence from their comrades in return for their privations.

Another peculiar custom is to hold a potlatch, or free distribution of gifts, at the principal villages every summer. Potlatch in Chinook signifies 'to give,' or 'a gift.' These meetings of many tribes are the scenes of much festivity. Clad in the skins of the bear, panther, wolf, beaver, eagle, or elk, Indians represent the respective animals, imitating their peculiar cries and other characteristics with wonderful fidelity to nature. When the time arrives, the chief and principal men among the hosts proceed to distribute large supplies of blankets and muskets, the latter being often thrown into the sea and dived for. Much honour is accorded to the greatest giver, and the chiefs need to be large-hearted as well as wealthy to retain their dignity.

When the writer of this sketch left the island, its mineral wealth was very considerable, and still continues to be so. Many thousand tons of the best coal on the Pacific coast were exported every month from Nanaimo and vicinity. Other large veins known to exist, were not worked, from a lack of capital and for other reasons best known to the proprietors. The Texada iron mountain, in the Straits of Georgia, together with other metallic deposits, may in the future claim the attention they deserve. When finished, the Canadian Pacific Railway will bring the right kind of emigrants to these shores, and doubtless more extensive quantities of arable land than are now cultivated will be found in the interior, when the demand for it is increased. The present race of settlers are a hardy, hospitable class of

men, expert with the axe, daring and dexterous canoeists, and very ingenious in meeting the continual difficulties and vicissitudes of backwoods life. Keen hunters are often to be met among them, men who are so successful with the rifle that their families keep a full larder without the aid of butcher or poulterer.

An enlightened system of free schools enables the widely scattered children of this island and of the other portions of British Columbia to obtain a substantial education at the public expense; and much credit is due to the energy and ability of the school superintendent, whose task it has been to organise and perfect the present satisfactory educational arrangements. We shall be glad if these sketches help to stir up an interest concerning this beautiful and productive island.

THE ADMIRAL'S SECOND WIFE.

CHAPTER IX.—TANGLED THREADS.

THERE is another listener to the song, and every word of it falls on his heart with intense meaning. It seems to him a lamenting wail of despair wrung out from aching hearts. The Admiral has returned from an official dinner-party, and when he reaches the drawing-room door, the duet is just begun. Rather surprised, and a good deal vexed at seeing Walter Reeves so soon installed as a familiar guest at Government House, he pauses, and the words of the song fall distinctly on his ear.

In bygone days, Captain Reeves was the only one amongst all Katie's admirers who really gave him uneasiness; and if truth must be confessed, he had often felt a pang of jealousy at the great attention Walter paid her, and by his un concealed admiration of the young lady. He had made up his mind there was an end to all that now. His wife would henceforth be far removed from such influence; and when she and Walter should chance to meet, their acquaintanceship would be strictly ceremonious.

Yet now, they have taken up the old strain, and are already deploring in doleful song the hard fortune that has divided their lives. Sir Herbert has no idea of pretence or mere acting or of singing for effect. He is true to the 'heart's core' himself, and would not deign to seem other than he is. The words come to him with terrible meaning, and rouse him to sudden awakening. Has he spoiled their lives? While he would shield his wife from every rough wind and from all that could vex and annoy, has he only been driving her to despair? The guests are all so occupied that they do not notice the Admiral at the door, nor do they see him turn away with bowed head and a weight like an added ten years pressing on his heart.

Are Laura's words proving true? Has Katie only married him for wealth and position, while her heart has been given to Walter Reeves? Is she growing weary already, and pining in her gilded chains? Terrible thoughts these! They eat into his very soul, and crush him down as he has never been crushed before. He is only thankful no one sees the storm of agony that sweeps over him, while the merry music still goes on up-stairs.

Why did he not tell Katie then? She would

have flown to his arms, and assured him, truthfully enough, that she has grown to love him better than any one else in the world. Pleasure-loving, thoughtless, she may be, but no thought of disloyalty to her husband has ever entered her heart. But the Admiral asks no question, gives no sign, only shrouds himself up with a proud man's reticence and reserve. Though deeply hurt and wounded, he goes on his way silently, and Katie never for a moment suspects that she is making him wretched.

The next morning Walter arrives, and all the others who are to take part in the entertainment arrive also; so the rooms are again crowded, and the rehearsal goes on with spirit. There is a sound of music and talk, of song and discussion. Peals of silvery laughter burst forth; snatches of various airs are heard; Major Dillon's voice loud and prompt; Liddy Delmere's, clear and ringing. All are excited; and Walter Reeves, from his experience on the subject, is voted by all, chief authority and general manager.

Nothing loath to bear the honour, he makes even the consequential Major play second-fiddle to him. He flirts with Liddy, while she purposely goes wrong, to be set right by him; and Katie smiles more than ever at the rapid friendship springing up between the two. It is on this scene of distracting confusion that Sir Herbert looks, as he returns home an hour earlier than usual. He glances gravely round on the busy groups, who are all talking and laughing together, and cannot understand what they are about in the broad daylight, turning the quiet matter-of-fact noonday into the revelry of night. His greeting to the guests is rather formal; there is a faint compression on his lips, a slight furrow on his brow, as he listens to the allusions and watches the proceedings. In fact the guests, his wife, and all seem to him to have gone a little out of their senses. At last the visitors decide it is time to depart, and they go off in high spirits, promising to meet again there in the evening.

Sir Herbert has all that morning been taking himself to task for his hard thoughts about Katie; but resolves to atone by paying her more devoted attention. What would he not do to win her back! No sacrifice can be too great, he thinks; so he begins by coming home an hour earlier than usual, only to find fresh annoyance and disappointment. When the guests are gone, he turns his grave inflexible face to Katie, and says: 'I came back early, my darling, on purpose to drive you to Belton Park.'

Lady Dillworth is gathering up the pen-and-ink sketches of costumes, glancing at each, and mentally considering what jewels she will use to adorn the highly ornamented stomacher of Lucy Ashton's blue dress, so she replies quickly: 'I'm sorry you fixed on this morning for a drive, Herbert, for I cannot possibly get away; I've no end of music to try over.'

'Perhaps there will be time in the afternoon then. Lady Ribson leaves Belton Park in a few days, and I promised to introduce you to her.'

'Does she return to Scotland?'

'Yes. Had she not been so old and feeble, she would have come here to call for you.'

'Oh, I am so sorry about it, Herbert; but every minute of to-day is portioned out: I've a hundred things to do.'